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Mandated areas

Information received from the United Nations system

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat

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1. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established by the Economic and Social Council with a broad mandate, including "to prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues". Recognizing the importance of this mandate, the Department of Public Information is committed to providing support to the Permanent Forum to ensure its realization.

2. Considering the strategic goals of the Forum, it would seem that two types of information dissemination are needed:

(a) information about the Permanent Forum itself – what it is and how it works -- and about other relevant UN system activities, aimed especially at indigenous peoples, to raise their awareness of how the United Nations is working on their behalf and encourage them to participate and make the best use of the services provided;

(b) information about the range of challenges indigenous peoples face -- such as health, education, cultural preservation and land rights -- aimed at a broader audience, especially in countries that have large indigenous populations and in donor countries – as advocacy tools.

3. Using both these approaches, since the first meeting of the Permanent Forum in May 2002, the Department of Public Information has been working to publicize the meetings and activities of the Forum, in close cooperation with its Secretariat, as well as raising awareness about indigenous issues.

4. The Department's activities include proactive media outreach undertaken by the DPI focal point for indigenous issues, in the Development Section. To publicize the sessions of the Permanent Forum and other newsworthy events, such as the International Day for the World's Indigenous People, media alerts and press releases are regularly issued and distributed, not only to UN correspondents based at Headquarters, but also to a targeted e-mail list of journalists worldwide who follow indigenous issues. Special efforts are made to contact indigenous journalists and to facilitate their attendance at the Forum's sessions. Press conferences are organized for the Forum Chairperson and Members, and other indigenous spokespersons, and numerous interviews have been set up, with both radio and print journalists, for the Chairperson and Members, as well as other United Nations experts and Special Rapporteurs.

5. The Department worked closely with the Forum Secretariat in publicizing the **Global Forum on Indigenous Peoples and the Information Society** (Geneva, 8-11 December), held as a parallel event to the World Summit on the Information Society. Press releases were issued in New York and Geneva, as well as posted on-line, and a press conference on the event's outcome was organized, featuring the Forum Chairperson and one of its Members.

6. The Department produced a 16-page colour brochure, "United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Voices", which has been issued in English, French and Spanish, with Arabic, Chinese and Russian versions soon to come. It has

been posted on the Forum Secretariat web site, and disseminated throughout the world, and is provided in quantities to Forum Members for their work. DPI also prepares information kits for all the Forum participants, with the aim of providing them with information tools for their on-going advocacy work.

7. The global network of **United Nations Information Centres and Services** makes a major contribution to publicizing the Forum and its activities in the countries they serve. Efforts are being undertaken to enlist the services of the information centres to support the work of Forum Members in their home countries and to use them as spokespersons in local media.

8. Many information centres organize events to commemorate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Of special note, in August 2003, UNIC Mexico City organized the First Indigenous Concert of the Americas, in cooperation with the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Populations, the National Council on Arts and Culture and UNESCO. Indigenous music groups from ten countries performed to an audience of over 7,000 people. UNIC Bogota co-organized a press conference with the national representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, also including local indigenous spokespersons, that received extensive coverage from television, radio and print media. UNIC Lisbon produced an article on the situation of indigenous children which was published in the current affairs weekly *Semanario.*

9. The Department also publicizes the Forum's work and indigenous issues through its regular news channels and information products:

10. The **United Nations News Centre** on the UN web page (www.un.org/News) regularly covers the meetings of the Permanent Forum. **UN Television** provides coverage of important segments of the Forum, which are also then webcast and archived on-line.

11. The Department's **press releases** summarizing the proceedings of the Forum are heavily utilized by the Forum Members and indigenous participants, and DPI is arranging for these to be translated into Spanish for posting on the Forum website.

12. Radio offers the widest penetration to the many indigenous peoples who do not read and who receive most of their information by that medium. **UN Radio** views the two weeks of the Permanent Forum with anticipation and enthusiasm — a treasure trove of audio material comes to Headquarters. At the second session of the Forum, special features were produced in most of the languages of UN Radio – Arabic, Chinese, English, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese and Swahili. Special attention was paid to issues of importance to indigenous peoples, such as education, economic development and cultural preservation. A global perspective was also used: interviews with indigenous people of the far north — such as the current Forum Chairperson — were broadcast to rural communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America, where the listeners may not have realized that in Sweden or Norway there are also indigenous peoples with concerns similar to theirs about land rights. For the third session, women's issues will be a major focus. Endangered languages, cultural preservation and informed consent are also topics being considered for possible features.

13. For television audiences, the Department's **UN in Action** series, which is broadcast on CNN International and other outlets, over the last two years has spotlighted indigenous communities and problems they face in Bolivia, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, among others.

14. Coinciding with the second session of the Permanent Forum, the Department mounted at UN Headquarters a major **exhibit**, "In Celebration of Indigenous People", featuring indigenous art from 13 countries on four continents, and photography of the indigenous world by notable photographers. The exhibit included demonstrations of indigenous crafts, such as traditional Iroquois beadwork, that encouraged participation, especially by young people.

15. For the third session, the Department is co-sponsoring, along with the Permanent Mission of Australia to the UN, a photographic exhibit of Aboriginal sacred rites and ceremonies. Also shown will be a photo exhibit from the National Geographic Society and artwork from various indigenous artists.

16. The Department's **UN Works** programme, as part of the "*What's Going On?*" television series co-produced with and aired on the Showtime channel, featured a half-hour episode on Aboriginal youth, focusing on their struggle to succeed. Viewers were directed to the UN Works website (www.un.org/works) for more detailed stories about the problems of indigenous youth and links to the Permanent Forum and other UN system websites.

17. The UN Works programme, through its partnership with Discovery Channel and UNESCO, has also created a series of public service announcements (PSAs) on endangered languages. This partnership will continue this year with additional PSAs, which began to air on International Mother Language Day, 21 February.

18. DPI's **Global Teaching and Learning Project** launched "Pumped Up for Peace", a global project to help communities around the world gain access to safe drinking water. The first community is in the Amazon rainforest and includes three indigenous groups —the Mats'genka, Wachipaeri and Quechua.

19. The Global Teaching and Learning Project will soon be partnering with a non-governmental organization to create a multimedia presentation on the impact of tourism on an indigenous community in Peru. The first of several multimedia projects on issues affecting indigenous communities told through the eyes of indigenous youth, this presentation will focus on Quechua farmers in the Andes, many of whom have been enticed to leave their farms by the money they can make as porters for tourists trekking to Machu Pichu. Educational materials will be developed to explore the effects of tourism on the family life, education, health and cultural integrity of the community.

20. Future proposals will be presented to the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum to seek funding for additional projects, including the development of a curriculum to accompany the UN Works episode on Aboriginal youth and the development of a website on Cyberschoolbus for indigenous children.

21. The ***UN Chronicle*** magazine regularly highlights the work of the Permanent Forum and indigenous issues. In the past year, it has run several major articles, including a feature in its Partnerships section, "Indigenous People: Opening the First Door to the UN", and an earlier article, "Permanent Forum Moves Beyond Human Rights Concerns".

22. In addition to including indigenous issues in its regular programming, the Department seeks to utilize news opportunities as they arise. For example, when the United Nations Secretary-General issued a statement on indigenous issues during his visit in 2003 to Machu Pichu in Peru, the text, which had been translated into official as well as three indigenous languages, was disseminated through UNICs and other DPI channels.

Logo competition

23. The Forum is planning an art competition among indigenous children around the world to submit proposals for a logo, or visual identity, for the Forum. The Department stands ready to assist in any way that it can, within its resources.